

Joshua Part 3: “Boldly Going Where No Man has Gone Before” “The Faith of a Failure”

1. Review

- a. Quote on Tradition: *“Traditions are group efforts to keep the unexpected from happening.”*
 - i. Isn't that what we do...we aren't comfortable with God doing something unexpected?
 - ii. Yet, that is the story of the book of Joshua. They were literally going where they had never been before, doing something they had never dreamed of doing, and being a part of God doing something that had never been done before (birthing a nation of people whose God is the Lord).
- b. **We need to expect God to do the unexpected.**
 - i. Our God is not One that can be boxed, packaged, controlled or channeled.
 - ii. We sometimes think that God is like a little kitten that we tell when to come and go.
 1. We want to tell Him when the services should begin and end...and we get antsy when its 12:15 and people are lining up for a touch from God.
 - iii. We call out “here kitty kitty...” but instead of coming like a tame cat, we hear the Lion of Judah roar! And then we realize we cannot tame our God, we cannot control Him, instead He calls out for us to stand in awe of His power and authority.
 - iv. Whenever we get together we must have this attitude of expectancy. If we want safe and controlled, Jesus Christ is not the Lord for us.
 - v. We must not be like the Pharisees in Jesus' time who couldn't believe that God would heal sick people or make blind see or raise the dead. Why...it just wasn't proper and orderly. It didn't fit their nice neat box.
- c. **Religion and tradition are like kryptonite to the church. They rob the church of power and the presence of God and trade a dynamic relationship with God for a cheap substitute of comfort.**
- d. What is God doing in our midst? Look around!

2. Today:

- a. **(Joshua 2:1-7)** ¹ Then Joshua son of Nun secretly sent two spies from Shittim. "Go, look over the land," he said, "especially Jericho." So they went and entered the house of a prostitute ² named Rahab and stayed there. ² The king of Jericho was told, "Look! Some of the Israelites have come here tonight to spy out the land." ³ So the king of Jericho sent this message to Rahab: "Bring out the men who came to you and entered your house, because they have come to spy out the whole land." ⁴ But the woman had taken the two men and hidden them. She said, "Yes, the men came to me, but I did not know where they had come from." ⁵ At dusk, when it was time to close the city gate, the men left. I don't know which way they went. Go after them quickly. You may catch up with them." ⁶ (But she had taken them up to the roof and hidden them under the stalks of flax she had laid out on the roof.) ⁷ So the men set out in pursuit of the spies on the road that leads to the fords of the Jordan, and as soon as the pursuers had gone out, the gate was shut."
3. Joshua gets the people mobilized, telling them to pack up their belongings because in just 3 days they will cross the Jordan. Meanwhile, he also sends two spies to go check out the walled fortress city of Jericho.
 - a. “The use of these spies was not a lack of faith, but rather a demonstration that **TRUE FAITH is an ACTIVE FAITH**. Joshua didn't send the spies to determine whether or not the people SHOULD attack the city...He sent the spies out to help plan the attack!
 - i. There is an application for you and I here.
 - ii. When God tells you or I to do something, we don't just sit there. We are to ACT upon what God says to us.
 1. EXAMPLE?

4. ⁸ Before the spies lay down for the night, she went up on the roof⁹ and said to them, "I know that the LORD has given this land to you and that a great fear of you has fallen on us, so that all who live in this country are melting in fear because of you. ¹⁰ We have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red Sea ¹¹ for you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to Sihon and Og, the two kings of the Amorites east of the Jordan, whom you completely destroyed. ¹² When we heard of it, our hearts melted and everyone's courage failed because of you, for the LORD your God is God in heaven above and on the earth below. ¹³ Now then, please swear to me by the LORD that you will show kindness to my family, because I have shown kindness to you. Give me a sure sign ¹⁴ that you will spare the lives of my father and mother, my brothers and sisters, and all who belong to them, and that you will save us from death." ¹⁵ "Our lives for your lives!" the men assured her. "If you don't tell what we are doing, we will treat you kindly and faithfully when the LORD gives us the land." ¹⁶ So she let them down by a rope through the window, for the house she lived in was part of the city wall. ¹⁷ Now she had said to them, "Go to the hills so the pursuers will not find you. Hide yourselves there three days until they return, and then go on your way." ¹⁸ The men said to her, "This oath you made us swear will not be binding on us ¹⁹ unless, when we enter the land, you have tied this scarlet cord in the window through which you let us down, and unless you have brought your father and mother, your brothers and all your family into your house. ²⁰ If anyone goes outside your house into the street, his blood will be on his own head; we will not be responsible. As for anyone who is in the house with you, his blood will be on our head if a hand is laid on him. ²¹ But if you tell what we are doing, we will be released from the oath you made us swear." ²² "Agreed," she replied. "Let it be as you say." So she sent them away and they departed. And she tied the scarlet cord in the window. ²³ When they left, they went into the hills and stayed there three days, until the pursuers had searched all along the road and returned without finding them. ²⁴ Then the two men started back. They went down out of the hills, forded the river and came to Joshua son of Nun and told him everything that had happened to them. ²⁵ They said to Joshua, "The LORD has surely given the whole land into our hands; all the people are melting in fear because of us."
5. **This story** is not just the story of a prostitute who found grace and mercy. It is each one of our stories. It is our story of God entering our homes, showing us who He is, and leading us to embrace His love and mercy.
- a. Rahab was a prostitute who was likely making a decent living.
 - i. Her home was right on top of the city's wall. This is where the more expensive houses were. Portions of Jericho's walls were 12 feet thick, allowing for individual dwellings to be built into them. [Spirit filled life study Bible. 1997, c1991 (electronic ed.) (Jos 2:15). Nashville: Thomas Nelson. Overlooking the entry to the city, she could look out her window as men approached the city and entice them.
 - ii. It is pretty safe to assume that Rahab was a temple prostitute. As a temple prostitute, they worshiped fertility gods, which they believed their act of worship –engaging in sexual relations would ensure the fertility of the land.
 1. In a very real sense, this woman was immoral by our standards, a temple prostitute who actively worshipped the perverse gods of the land.
 - iii. Most of us wouldn't have dared to approach this woman with the gospel, much less considered her to be remotely open to God. Yet, listen to what she says in v 10 and 11:
 1. *We have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red Sea for you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to Sihon and Og, the two kings of the Amorites east of the Jordan, whom you completely destroyed. 11 When we heard of it, our hearts melted and everyone's courage failed because of you, for the LORD your God is God in heaven above and on the earth below.*
 2. She has declared her belief that the God of the Israelites is the Ultimate God of both heaven and earth. She is declaring that her gods are worthless.
6. Why did Rahab believe? Was it just to save her life from the invading horde that was coming in just a few days?

- a. If any of the people of Jericho found out about what she had done then Rahab would lose everything. And yet, Rahab believed that if she didn't side with the Israelites and their God then she would definitely lose everything.
- b. **Rahab's faith was based on who God is not who she was.** (v. 1, 9-11)
 - i. And therein lies the crux of the matter – Rahab wasn't trusting in these spies for her salvation – she was trusting in the God of these spies!
 - ii. In order to have faith in God, she had to lose faith in everything else!
 - iii. Rahab could have turned the spies in and then benefited from the reward of being the one who captured them.
 - iv. But Rahab based her faith not on who she is, a Canaanite woman of Jericho, a prostitute, a woman living on the outside of the city walls –
 - v. Rahab based her faith on who God is – the God who does what He says He will do, who keeps His promises, and who protects and saves His people.
 - vi. And in doing so, Rahab willingly surrendered everything she had to His mercy!
 - vii. In so doing, her life changed forever!
 - viii. **This is the kind of faith that moves the heart of God.**
 1. When a person surrenders everything, places everything they know, love, and trust on the line and at the mercy of God.
 2. When a person willingly trusts God with their life – not trying to control it in any way themselves, then God marvels at and rewards their faith. (Just as Jesus marveled at the faith of the Gentiles). This is the kind of faith that can move mountains.
 3. In fact, Rahab is one of only 2 women mentioned in Hebrews 11 (the faith hall of fame chapter – that lists people who were rewarded for their faith).
- c. Rahab had never seen the deliverance at the Red Sea, nor had she seen the glory cloud or the pillar of fire, and she had never tasted manna. But she had heard of the great things God had done.
 - i. You see, Our God is a supernatural miracle working God. He is not content to let us make religious people. That is why supernatural miracles are still relevant today. God displays His character through His deeds.

7. **Faith leaves a lasting legacy.**

- a. Rahab acknowledged that the Lord, the God of the Israelites is the Supreme God of both heaven and earth. In so doing, she saved her entire household from the destruction that the rest of the city would bear.
- b. But something else happened as well. Rahab, the prostitute has a legacy. Yes, a prostitute, one of the lowest forms of life in the Middle Eastern world, ended up having a destiny and a legacy. How? Why?
 - i. Matthew 1:4-6 “*Nahshon the father of Salmon, Salmon the father of Boaz, whose mother was Rahab, Boaz the father of Obed, whose mother was Ruth, Obed the father of Jesse, and Jesse the father of King David.*”
 - ii. While the identity of the two spies is not specifically given, we can speculate that one of them was Salmon of the tribe of Judah. His father Nahshon was the leader of that tribe during the earlier wilderness wanderings Numbers 1:7 Of Judah; Nahshon the son of Amminadab.;
- c. If you read the rest of the genealogy you'd discover that she also became the ancestor of Joseph, the husband of Mary, the mother of Jesus.
 - i. What a terrible woman she was to begin with:
 1. She was a pagan living in spiritual darkness.
 2. She was a harlot living in sinful depravity.
 3. She was a Canaanite bound for sure destruction.
 4. She didn't have information about the Only True and living God. She knew nothing of the written Law of God. She was brought up in a situation of gross

spiritual darkness. She was a stranger to the covenants and the promises of redemption...yet this woman found grace through faith & was transformed.

5. She was so transformed that she married a prince of Israel. She became the great-great grandmother of King David. She became a part of the bloodline of Jesus Christ.
 6. She went from a child of hell to a citizen of heaven; from a shady lady to a shiny star; from call girl to converted girl; from disgrace to dignity; from the house of shame to the hall of fame ---transformed by the grace of God.
8. Is her story yours? Everyone of us has some Rahab in us! We all have things in our past, or even our present that we feel would keep God from loving and accepting us. We all have things in our lives that we feel would keep God from sparing us His judgment.
- a.
 - b. 21 *"Agreed," she replied. "Let it be as you say." So she sent them away and they departed. And she tied the scarlet cord in the window.*
 - i. Faith in the Cross of Christ, that scarlet cord of mercy which God has flung out from the windows of heaven, can save us from death and reconcile us to God. Is the scarlet thread of the Cross over your soul?
9. We don't deserve to be saved. The world of which we're a part is going to be destroyed. There are others who can be saved, if we can convince them to join us. We come to have faith in God based on what we hear about Him and what He has done. And just as surely as Rahab hung a red cord outside her house's window, there's a red cord running through your Bible.
- a. Who are you praying for to meet Christ? Each one to reach one to reach our world? Did you get your card? Are you praying for people to be saved?
 - b. Grace. Undeserved, unearned. Merciful grace. A gift from God.
 - c. Rahab wanted to escape the wrath of God, but God did MUCH more.
 - i. Christians lose God's punishment and gain God's presence. 1 Thessalonians 1:9-10
 - ii.